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Letter dated 18 February 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The High-Level Meeting on Food Security for All was held in Madrid on 26 and 27 January 2009, convened on behalf of the Organization by the Prime Minister of Spain and yourself. More than 126 countries participated in the High-Level Meeting, 62 of which were represented at the ministerial level, in addition to many international organizations, donor agencies and a considerable number of non-governmental organizations from civil society and the private sector.

The High-Level Meeting was held in order to address the effects of the volatility of food prices on the most vulnerable populations and, thereby, to accelerate progress towards the achievement of Goal 1 of the Millennium Development Goals. To that end, the High-Level Meeting took the conclusions of the High-Level Conference on World Food Security: the Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy (held in Rome, from 3 to 5 June 2008) as its starting point, along with the recommendations in the Comprehensive Framework for Action, drawn up by the United Nations High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis.

Following the working sessions, the Chair of the High-Level Meeting drew up the "Madrid Declaration", which was presented during the closing session. The "Madrid Declaration" presents a summary of the work done during the High-Level Meeting, which includes agreeing on short-, medium- and long-term food security measures and beginning a broad, inclusive consultation process on ways to create a global partnership for agriculture, food security and nutrition.

I am pleased to include with this letter the text of the "Madrid Declaration" (see annex). I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be distributed as a document of the General Assembly under item 44 of the agenda for its sixty-third session and as a document of the Economic and Social Council, in particular relation to the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

(*Signed*) Juan Antonio **Yáñez-Barnuevo**

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Annex to the letter dated 18 February from the Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Madrid Declaration

High-Level Meeting on Food Security for All

The High-Level Meeting on Food Security for All, held in Madrid, convened by the Government of Spain and the United Nations, brought together a wide range of committed stakeholders from more than 126 countries. Participants included representatives of Governments, civil society, trade unions, the private sector, universities, donor agencies and multilateral organizations. Its aim was to accelerate progress towards the achievement of Goal 1 of the Millennium Development Goals and to address the effects of the fluctuation in the price of food on the most vulnerable populations. They worked together to review the progress made since the High-Level Conference in Rome (June 2008), to agree on ways to move forward quickly, with short-, medium- and long-term measures, and to establish mechanisms to enable better coordination.

1. Participants reaffirmed the conclusions of the 1996 World Food Summit and the objectives confirmed by the World Food Summit: five years later, to achieve food security for all through an ongoing effort to eradicate hunger in all countries, with an interim goal of halving the number of people suffering from hunger by no later than 2015, as well as their commitment to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Participants also reaffirmed the Declaration of the High-Level Conference on World Food Security: the Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy, held in Rome in June 2008.

2. They reaffirmed that States had a primary responsibility to make their best efforts to respect, ensure, fulfil and promote the right to have regular and permanent access to adequate food, especially for children under the age of 5, women and other vulnerable groups. In aiming to achieve the right to food, States were encouraged to seek inspiration from the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security, adopted by the Council of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in 2004.

3. Participants were deeply concerned by the unacceptable global food insecurity situation that affected over 960 million people. They were also concerned by the negative impact of the fluctuations in food access and availability, exacerbated by the current financial crisis, on the livelihoods of the poorest, most vulnerable people in the world. They were convinced of the urgent need to strive even harder to achieve their international commitments substantially to increase financial resources and official development assistance, particularly in relation to nutrition, food, agriculture and programmes to combat hunger.

4. They recognized the progress achieved in fulfilling commitments agreed by national governments and the international community at the Rome Conference, but also recognised that more still needed to be done. They strongly supported the efforts of the Secretary-General

of the United Nations and the High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis to promote a coordinated and adequately funded response.

5. Participants were convinced of the need to undertake short-, medium- and long-term measures, in line with the Comprehensive Framework for Action, to mobilize the adequate resources that had already been committed in a flexible and predictable manner, and to identify financing gaps and mobilize the additional resources needed for the existing mechanisms for responding to severe food and nutrition crises, including food and nutrition assistance, for social protection programmes, and for supporting smallholders. They also indicated the need for agreements to coordinate the utilization of those resources.

6. Participants were convinced that those actions would only be effective and efficient if they were led by the governments of the affected countries, their parliaments, local governments and citizens, following the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action, focusing on the needs of the people suffering from hunger, malnutrition and food insecurity.

7. Participants stressed the importance of engaging civil society and the private sector in the implementation of coordinated actions for alleviating food insecurity among the most vulnerable populations, at community, local, regional, national and global levels.

8. They emphasized that all aspects of food security must be addressed, not only by increasing production, but also by developing social protection systems and eliminating all forms of competition-distorting subsidies, in order to develop a fair system of agricultural trade.

9. Participants stressed that the economic and social development of rural areas must become a primary policy objective, since food and agriculture fulfil a key function that must be consolidated and enhanced. Thus, enhancing sustainable rural development was essential — in particular the agricultural value chain, associated services, and the policy environment in which it operated.

10. They supported the importance of including the marginalized and the excluded, men, women and children in the process, giving them a voice so that their views were prioritized when analyzing the problems, searching for viable solutions and implementing them.

11. They agreed on the importance of establishing a broad, inclusive consultation process on ways to create a global partnership for agriculture, food security and nutrition, beginning at the High-Level Meeting in Madrid. They emphasized that the following elements were important in a consultation process, which should be convened and facilitated by members of the United Nations High-Level Task Force:

(a) The consultation process should be open to the full range of stakeholders involved in agriculture, food security and nutrition (including farmers' organizations, civil society organizations, women's organizations, the private sector, governments in developing countries, and international and regional organizations).

(b) A representative contact group, accountable to all interested partners, should be established to oversee and guide the consultation process.

(c) The consultation process should have a sound methodology that is based on best practice, involves participation at all levels and includes regular feedback to all stakeholders.

(d) The contact group should identify and highlight positive examples of existing partnerships.

12. Participants were determined to ensure access to adequate food for all in a sustainable manner, to improve nutrition, to stimulate food production, to strengthen social protection systems, and to increase investment in all areas related to food security.

Participants committed to making food security for all a reality.

Madrid, January 27th 2009

This Declaration reflects the summary of the debates by the Chair of the High-Level Meeting

The High-Level Meeting on Food Security for All was attended by 62 Ministers and delegations from more than 126 countries